Knights of Columbus Send Their Trucks to Every Sector

A Girl's Story of a Night Ride to Chateau Thierry

By Carol Corey

With the Knights of Columbus Motor Service at the Front

PARIS, Oct. 20 (By Mail).—Along the shell-swept roads that lead to Château Thierry, where the American army delivered its first smashing blow, motor trucks bearing loads of supplies and secretaries representing the big American war service organizations forged a way in the wake of the troops and established themselves amid the ruins of the captured town. Y. M. C. A. trucks were early on the scene and Jewish Welfare and Salvation Army workers were quick to arrive. The Knights of Columbus sent four trucks loaded with supplies from Paris, and I was aboard the first that started for the battle front.

There were six of us—Cap and Long Joe, the Kid and Mac, and the ex-Canuck and me. Ex got his name because he had been in the Canadian army until a shell almost blinded him. We were ready to leave Paris on Sunday with the two big trucks, the trailer and the little yellow auto. In them were 175,000 sheets of writing paper, as many envelopes and many dozens of postcards, enormous boxes of chocolate and even larger ones of tobacco of every kind ready for the new soldiers' club which the Knights of Columbus were to open in Château Thierry. The red K. C. on the vivid blue background stood out bravely, not only on the cars, but on our sleeves and on my hat as well.

The morning was glorious. I was up much too early, so I stood for a long time on my tiny balcony, breathing the freshness of a newly washed city. It had rained steadily during three days, but now the sun seemed to be trying hard to make up for lost time. My long street was full of animation. Little family parties carrying lunch baskets were starting excitedly for a happy day in the country. Wives and mothers went eagerly to the meat, fish and fruit and vegetable markets, for in France the best of all these things is always to be had on Sunday. Such good natured pushing as friend meets friend and inquires with patient politeness after the health and wellbeing of each and every member of the other's family! Such turning over and picking out and pinching of yellow peaches and apricots and sweet smelling melons! Such discussions about rosebud radishes, golden carrots and purple eggplants!

The Peaceful Open Country

White-capped gossiping maids are giving a final polish to already dazzling doorknobs, which vie in brilliancy with the horse head over the shop next door. Inside, long, thin carcasses of very dark meat streaked with very yellow fat sway a little on the hooks from which they hang. A fat, red-faced boy whose apron is much too large and too long, whistles shrilly as with infinite precision he places a hand-made sign in the window. It reads, "Great sale of mule today."

Cap has just pulled up in the little yellow car, while Mac and Ex are close behind in the first truck and Long Joe and the Kid wave cheerily from the second.

Soon we are out in the open country. Far to right and left and 'way off into the deep distance the sleepy summer fields lie bathed in sunshine. Great haystacks form shady resting places for tired peasants who have been toiling hard since sunup. They wave to us in friendly fashion, old men and women, girls and many children. Of course, there are no boys. It would all look like a splendid painting of contented farm life were it not for a big gun here and there, so cleverly hidden that only their big noses show. These seem to say, "I guard."

The roads are jammed with traffic. Huge camions filled with singing, laughing Yanks appear seemingly out of nowhere and disappear in a thick cloud of dust. Others, piled high with ammunition and food, telephone, telegraph and barbed wire, bread, gasolene, equipments and stretchers, come and come and come. At the crossroads military policemen control it all quite as easily and effectively as do our white-gloved minions of the law at home. A second seemingly endless caravan follows almost immediately upon the tail of the first, until by and by one becomes dizzy watching. It's just like a "movie" on the winding, hilly road.

We lunch in Meaux, that sleepy old town through which the Germans marched in 1914. Long Joe asks for a second helping of bread, and is severely reprimanded by the child who serves us. Outside in the blazing sun I come upon two soldiers from home. They are staring into a shop window at a few soiled post cards, a few brass watch chains and collar buttons and a handful of specked perfume bottles. I can't resist calling out: "Enlist in the war and see the world!" "Hello!" they cry. It's a pretty word when it's said like that.

We get to La Ferte late in the afternoon, where we are to meet the others. I wander to a high picket fence, on the other side of which khaki-clad Americans are salvaging vegetables. The cabbages and onions and most of the other things are no longer fresh, but the boys aren't complaining as they separate the sound from the spoiled. Meanwhile they tell me a little about themselves. They're all from Texas, and one is from a family that always has had slaves. "Not one of them left my grandmother after the Civil War," says he. "Two of them are still living. And all they do the whole day is to sit in the shade and smoke." "Think of that," sighs another. "Just sit in the shade and smoke!"

It gets to be 6 o'clock, and it gets to be 7. And still no sign of the trucks. So Cap decides that we will have to spend the night here, and we start out in search of rooms. The one little hotel is full, but after weary wanderings we hear of a place where the rooms aren't so bad, but where the woman who rents them is a "devil." After a great deal of conversation she agrees to take me in, and after a great deal more she consents to the rest coming, too. "But," says she, and both Cap and I quail before her contemptuous scrutiny, "I want it understood that these rooms will be two francs apiece." I look at a very uninviting bed. Cap looks at the floors of the other two rooms, which are absolutely empty, as though trying to pick out a soft one. After which he goes thoughtfully down the stairs and brings in his sleeping bag.

Then he tells me he is going down the road again in search of the lost ones, and by and by he returns with them. Some one finds a wabbly table, which is carried into the garden, and while I proceed to lay it Mac opens cans and the Kid slices ham. Long Joe digs out a yard of bread from the mass of blankets and baggage and Cap fries eggs and makes wonderful coffee on his little alcohol stove. The ex-Canuck—poetic soul!—wanders away for a little while. When he again appears he hands me a few flowers and exactly four berries of some unknown variety, with just the proper amount of "blarney."

Reluctantly we go to bed. The little house is still, except for an occasional cough, a muffled word and sometimes a groan, the latter because sleeping bags aren't as comfortable as they appear to be in catalogues. In the moonlight the hands of my watch point to twenty minutes past 3 o'clock.

Coffee to Cure Insomnia

Soon there are voices down in the garden. I hear Mac say: "I felt restless, so I came here to smoke." Then the Kid answers: "I'll tell you what let's do. Let's make a lot of coffee." Drowsiness is stealing over me, and the last thing I remember is Mac's droning: "No, be patient just a little longer. The night is almost done."

Next morning Cap and I drive through as much of Belleau Wood as we care to see. It isn't the pieces of horses still unburied nor the great swarms of flies which make us turn back. It's the sight of a baby cab with a gaping shell hole right through the middle.

We come upon Château Thierry in all the brightness of a summer afternoon. We pass through street after street of what were homes, now mute evidences of frail humanity's hate, and also of frail humanity's woe. An eloquent silence reigns. Nothing stirs except when a breath of wind catches up some of the thick white plaster dust and whirls it gleefully from ruin to ruin. We begin to meet soldiers, both French and American, but never a civilian, nor a dog, nor a cat. I can imagine nothing more heartbreaking than the emptiness of a place like this.

The kindly Mayor gives us written authority to occupy a house, which from the road looks presentable, but which entirely lacks rear walls. Both front and back yards are full of shell holes, and as we go into the house we pick our way cautiously through débris of every sort. There isn't a window in the place, and there's not much left of the furniture. Twelve dining room chairs from which the leather has been cut carefully stand stiffly in a row and a handsomely carved table tilts crazily on three legs. An inlaid chest in a corner is uninjured, except for a neat and uniform sized hole where was the lock of each drawer. Needless to state the drawers are empty. In the living room only the piano seems untouched.

Our new habitation is at the top of a rather steep hill, and as I stand at an upstairs window I am appalled by the desolation about me. Not a building in sight to right or left but has been hit. Across the roadway a bedraggled lace curtain has caught in a tree and the breeze swells it into a balloon. Cups and plates and pieces of bread are still on a table. Next door a bed hangs perilously from a second story window. Further down the road a stove or a cradle or a bicycle catches the eye.

I turn to look about the room which is to be mine. Here also all the locks have been cut from the furniture. On the dressing table is a household account book; the first entry is dated "July 27, 1896." It is for five metres of black velvet, 30 francs. Beside it is an old-fashioned photograph of a naked baby, and in a glass tray are two false teeth. In the next room what remains of the floor is covered inches deep with torn letters, broken ornaments, bedding and women's clothing. In the washroom the material of the pipes, cut into finest shavings, is strewn about, and I turn away sick at heart.

Suddenly I hear a jolly little whistle. It comes from Long Joe, who is carefully pasting two big K. of C. stickers on the white posts of our garden gate. So I try to sing a little myself and think hard of the chocolate and the smokes and the sorely needed club.

Mac comes in presently from a trip somewhere in the neighborhood, proudly exhibiting three clean sheets. One serves as tablecloth, and later I notice that some kind friend has put the other two on my bed. A generous mess sergeant having presented us with a loaf of bread and some cooked meat, our dinner is soon prepared. Again the ex-Canuck has found flowers. This time they were blooming bravely, close to a hole filled with lime, and they smile brightly at us in the glow of three half-burned candles. Cap's coffee is quite as good as it was last night, but somehow even that chokes us a little. We are all more or less silent, because for most of us it is the first visit close to what the soldiers call the "big show." Also the spirits of the departed owners of the place seem to be near, listening and watching.

Three Precious Clean Sheets

During the business of clearing up we hear a shy but confident "hello" close by, and there just outside of what was once the dining room door stand seventeen Yanks regarding us curiously.

"Come right in," yells the Kid, excitedly. "We're almost finished with the dishes," I add.

"Oh, how good that sounds," says a voice from the rear.

After which all the seventeen troop inside and, boylike, and especially soldierlike, soon make themselves comfortable. "Hey, Buddy," laughs one, "leokit me sittin' on a green plush chair."

Long Joe hands out the cigarettes while I run for the chocolate. Glancing into the yard I see a youngster all alone. When I ask him why he doesn't come in, too, he tells me he makes it a rule never to go into a house—they make him too homesick. So I give him pieces of chocolate and watch him until, looking very small, he disappears through the big open gate. As I turn back to the crowd I hear a chuckle and the remark: "Say, remember how your mother used to tell you to stay out of a draft?"

One lad, braver than the others, ventures: "It's sure nice to see a regular lady." But most of them are dreadfully frightened of me. It's so long since they've been accustomed to social pleasantries. However, they forget all about me when a little dog which has escaped from one of them begins a mad fight with its image in the mirror. "Go to it, Cammy!" they cry in wild enjoyment. When I can be heard I remark that Cammy's a funny name for a dog. "Oh, but the rest of it's 'flage,'" explains some one, and before we quite realize it we are all the best of friends, better and better as the room fills with smoke and the chocolate box gets emptier and the ex-Canuck begins to sing.

The Spell Of a Song

Here in the pitiful remains of somebody's home, with the flickering candlelight glimmering on the remnants of somebody's belongings, seventeen sons of seventeen faraway mothers listen spellbound to that tender—

"Like a candle that's set in the window at night,
Your sweet smile has cheered me and guided me right."

When it is finished there is no applause, but out of the shadows comes more than one distinct sniffle. So the ex-Canuck, remembering his own soldier days, breaks into a tune which everybody knows and everybody sings. The old red carpet tacked across the glassless window to hide our light from Heinie, who even now may be prowling up above, sways in the night wind. Or maybe it's from the noise of the ear-splitting chorus:

"I sa-aw you, yes, I saw you.
So, if you wanta to see your father and your father-land
Keep your head DOWN. Allee-MANG!"

A fellow named "Baldy" says he doesn't mind his naked head, because it's "Cootie proof" and offers to play for us. But he doesn't get far, for no sound comes from the keys. Nobody laughs, no one even smiles. We can understand that Fritzie may have needed leather, and that the ancient tapestries, removed from the walls, must have made souvenirs, but we utterly fail to grasp the workings of a mind which prompted cutting the strings of a piano.

Another song or two and it's time to "hike." The little procession starts out in "lump formation," all close together, in the inky night.

As we step carefully around and between the great shell holes one lad comes to me and says in a trembling voice: "I haven't got a thing to give you." Surprised, I listen further. "Course I COULD give you Cammy."

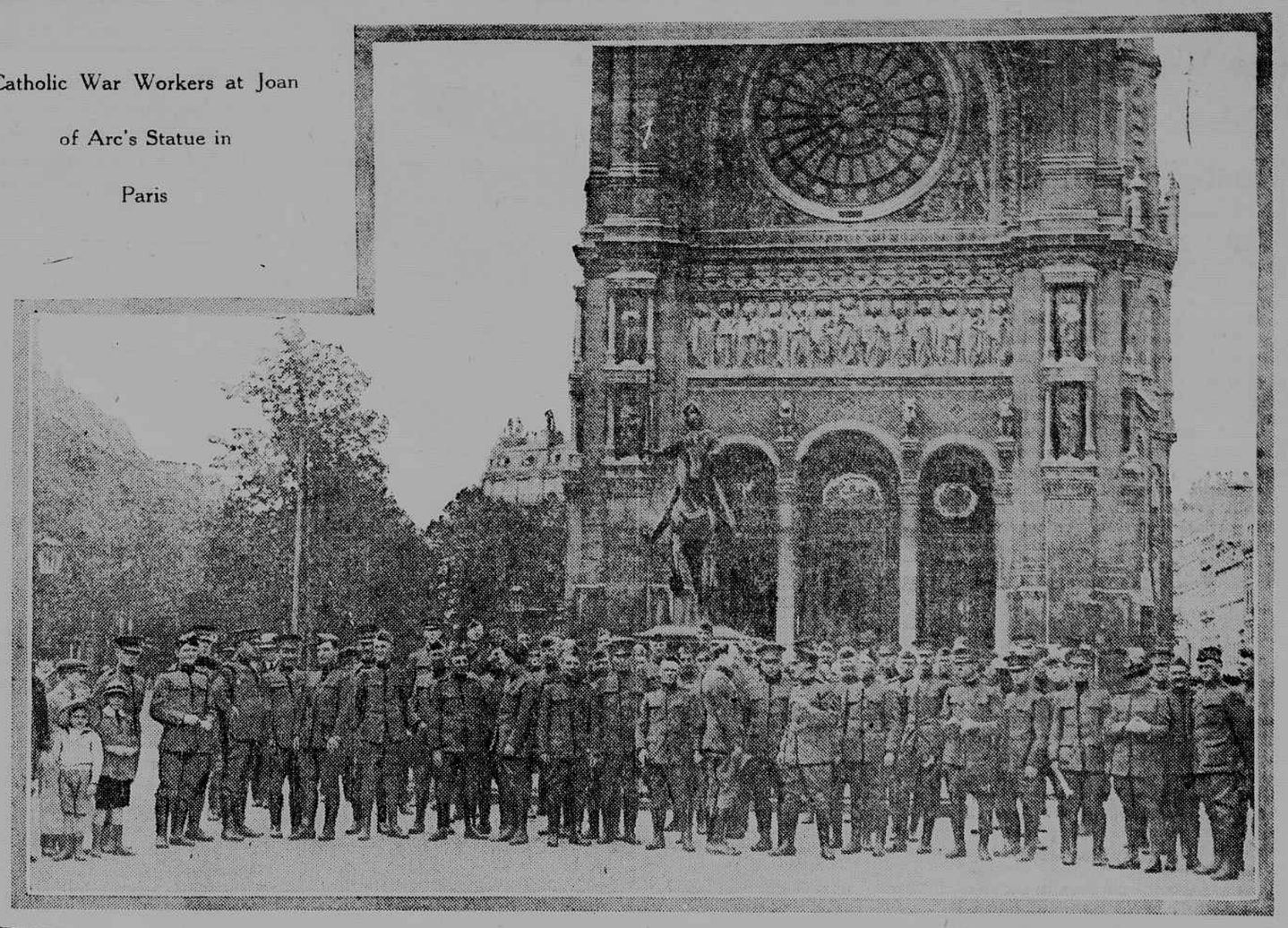
"Why, I'd never take Cammy," I interrupt. "I couldn't begin to love him as much as you do."

Struggling between gratitude and unselfishness he goes on: "Maybe he'd get gassed if we took him any closer to the front." But another voice chimes in, "Oh, no, he won't. I can make him a little gas mask."

A hearty handshake and a genuine "Thank you" from each one, and they start off down the long steep hill, but not sadly, for they have learned how to be happy in the present. A bit of chocolate, a fag and a word of cheer mean much to these strangers in a strange land. Their lusty young voices, loud at first, but gradually growing fainter and fainter, come back to us out of the darkness. They are singing:

"Ka-ka-ka Ka-tee, be-you-tiful Ka-tee.
You're the only g-g-girl that I do adore.
And when the moon shines over the cowshed
I'll be waiting in the ki-ki-ki-kitchen door."

The foolish words are so full of homesickness that I find myself in tears. And the last thing we hear as we walk silently back to the house seems to typify everything they've left behind and everything for which they long. It's only: "I wish you'd let ME carry Cammy for a little while."



Catholic War Workers at Joan of Arc's Statue in Paris

War Workers Follow the Flag

By James A. Flaherty

(Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus)

THE American public is presented with an opportunity to give direct personal aid to the boys in camp at home and overseas and in the battle zones, in the United War Work drive. For the first time in the history of the nation officially designated representatives of all religious elements have united in their appeal to secure funds in order to carry on the great work for our fighting men until the last regiment has been demobilized.

President Wilson, Secretary Baker, Secretary Daniels, Raymond B. Fosdick and other men to whom is intrusted the fate of the Republic in this ordeal of its existence have, in language far more eloquent and pertinent than any I can employ, stressed the vital importance of this work.

The American people have received from their own sons and brothers the very best indorsements of the work to which they are now rallied to give their further support. Soldiers and sailors by hundreds of thousands have testified to the benefits they receive at home and overseas from the Knights of Columbus and the other organizations with which the Knights of Columbus are coöperating in this war relief work. Let every mother and father of every brother and sister, let every wife who has a man enlisted under the fighting banner of the Republic think how they would most desire to help the absent hero at this very moment, and then let them consider that the very thing they desire for their soldier or sailor is being provided by the Knights of Columbus or some other of the seven organizations now united in a common appeal to the public and the $170,500,000 asked for will be quickly forthcoming.

No matter what the circumstances, whether in battle at the front, whether on shipboard or whether during the long period of demobilization and reconstruction following victory, the war work organizations are close to the men, studying their needs and supplying these needs promptly and efficaciously. Wherever the flag and its defenders go it is our privilege to go with them. And those in whose hearts are enshrined the fighting men of America may rest assured that no effort is being spared to the end of keeping our fighting men physically and spiritually fit for the tasks they have to perform, and of keeping them supplied with every form of education and recreation so that they may return home victorious, not only over the German enemy, but over those other enemies that assail men whether they are soldiers or sailors or merely engaged in civilian pursuits.

You'h and Age In Common Cause

WHEN the 6 o'clock whistle blows and the girls pour through the gates of a munitions plant here in Bloomfield, N. J., one of the brightest faced among them is a girl of sixty.

Not sixteen, but sixty! The war has made men of boys of eighteen not more surely than it has made girls of women of sixty.

This girl of sixty is a widow. She lived in England. Her oldest son went to the front and was killed. Her second son enlisted. Left alone, she came to the United States to make her home with a son who had moved to this country many years ago. Two months after she arrived President Wilson declared war and the third son went to the front.

She enlisted for service in the munitions plant. The death of the second son a few weeks ago has not impaired her vigor nor weakened her determination to serve. She sits on a work bench all day. In the evening in the recreation centre established by the Young Women's Christian Association she leads in the games. She plays for the girls when they sing; she teaches classes in knitting; she is the confidante of the girls in trouble, the participant of their sorrow and joy. She is the livest live wire in the group of five hundred girls who make this centre their home.

The same story is told everywhere. Youth and age are uniting in a common cause, and that this unity of purpose includes more than those of widely varied years is evidenced in the personnel of the seven organizations forming the War Work Council; they represent the Jewish Welfare Board, the War Camp Community Service, the Salvation Army, the American Library Association, the Knights of Columbus, the Y. W. C. A. and the Y. M. C. A.

IT is the business of the Y. W. C. A. to back up the women who are backing up the men. In France are huts for American nurses and French women workers in munition works. Thousands of American girls working as telephone operators under the signal corps are looked after in Y. W. hotels in England and on the Continent. Co-operating with the Y. W. are the Salvation Army lassies who toil among the men. These two organizations of women are an indispensable part of the seven. God bless the women.

A Paulist Priest Heads Catholic War Council

WORKING day and night to coördinate all the Catholic forces of this country in support of every variety of government wartime work, Father John J. Burke, chairman of the committee on special war activities of the National Catholic War Council, is to-day one of the most striking figures in Washington.

From the headquarters of his organization at the capital he is in constant touch with the wartime work of all the members of his church through a dozen bureaus and committees, as well as through a thousand men's and women's organizations. In every government field of wartime effort this vigorous Paulist priest is constantly ready to place the full force of the Catholics of the nation behind this country's endeavors.

No man in Washington is more respected or appreciated than Father Burke in official circles, where his help and advice are often sought. From the first entrance of the United States into the world war he has been constantly at his desk, directing the work of the National Catholic War Council in putting all Catholics most effectively behind every government effort to win the war.

Rev. John J. Burke

War service centres provided by the Y. W. C. A. War Work Council keep girls fit to do their bit on war orders for our armies overseas. For every man in khaki there will be a girl in war industries.

* * *

Hostess houses have been provided by the Y. W. C. A. War Work Council for the girls of the U. S. Signal Corps who tend the wires for the army in France.

Knights of Columbus Aim at Morale

"FROM my personal observation of the K. of C. work abroad and at home," says Raymond B. Fosdick, chairman of the War Department's Commission on Training Camp Activities, "I can most cordially indorse it. The work of the K. of C. is directly related to the winning of the war. It should be supported by all Americans—Protestants, Catholics, Jews—all. I have seen it in operation and I know that it is conducive to the best morale among our men."

Morale!

There is not a military commander directing the movements of vast armies who is not talking about morale these days. It's an important little word. It is constantly mentioned in official communiqués, and apparently the fate of nations depends upon it. Military experts declare that the failure of the morale of the Russian army caused the collapse of the empire of the Czar. As the morale of the German army weakens Allied leaders make gain after gain, and the First American Army, students of warfare insist, crashed through to a wonderful victory because of the highly excellent morale of General Pershing's fighters. The little word of six letters, which lately has become so common in America, really has a world of meaning.

It means that the soldier is sure he's right.

It means he's satisfied.
It means he's happy.
It means he's physically fit and morally clean.
It means he's deadly in earnest.

And it means he's ready to make any sacrifice to perpetuate his ideals.

It is pretty generally known throughout the Allied world, and the fact has probably reached Berlin by this time, that the American soldier is a real fighting man. He goes into battle with a song on his lips and dies with a smile in his eyes. That's morale. That's the sort of thing General Pershing and Marshal Foch have been talking about. It's the thing that decides battles and wins wars.

Marshal Foch, the French military genius, extended greetings to the Knights of Columbus in America and thanked them for the efforts they were making to help the Allied cause.

The strong position that has always been taken by the Knights of Columbus in regard to moral hazards surrounding a young man's life has been recognized and welcomed, giving rise to the firm confidence that the influence of the organization in the camps adds much to their general tone.

The Knights of Columbus is an organization with more than 430,000 members in the United States. It has measured up to the gigantic task it accepted when the United States entered the war and in attempting to keep pace in every way with the rapid growth of the American armies here and abroad.

Knights of Columbus secretaries are now everywhere. They may be found in American training camps and cantonments, on shell-torn fields in Flanders and Picardy, in base hospitals where American wounded are cared for, in Italy, at embarkation points, aboard transports, and at points of debarkation.

Clubhouses have been erected at points of embarkation in this country and debarkation points in France, and seventy-five secretaries have been assigned to permanent duty aboard transports plying between this country and European ports. One hundred secretaries have been ordered to Italy, where ten buildings are being erected.

When Marshal Foch called the Allied armies from the trenches and started the big drive toward Berlin the Knights immediately organized to "Follow the Flag." A fleet of big motor trucks was placed in operation to keep pace with the rapidly advancing armies and to provide our soldiers with a real "service under fire." Supplies, sent from America, are carried to several points of distribution near the front lines. Here the supplies are loaded on to smaller trucks and are carried directly to the men who are doing the actual fighting.

Knights of Columbus clubhouses, huts and tents everywhere are wide open to men of all races, creeds and color. The order's war workers accept no money for the supplies they distribute in hospitals, in the field, or anywhere else.

The order believes strongly in the development of athletics and outdoor sports. For this reason scores of men well known in athletics have been sent to American training camps and overseas and large amounts of athletic equipment have been placed. In addition, portable shower baths have been installed in huts in France wherever possible. Sports are encouraged, not only to keep the men physically fit, but to occupy their leisure time and keep them interested in clean recreation.

The Knights of Columbus aims to provide social, recreational and educational facilities to all men in the service of our country.

In the following stanza from the poem "Knights of Columbus," by Edgar Guest, recently published in "The Detroit Free Press," the spirit and mission of this society in its war work seem to be well expressed:

"They do not ask the faith or creed
Of him that comes into their hut;
True knighthood's door is never shut
Against a pilgrim warrior's need.
They question only: 'Would you rest
And are you weary and oppressed?
Then, brother, lay aside your care
And come this sheltering roof to share.'"

Comfort Kits for Christmas Cheer

"THIS looks like a darn good pipe," a Knights of Columbus secretary said one Sunday as he examined the contents of his comfort kit that was given him down at the League of Catholic Women Service House on the eve of his departure. "I know what I can do with all this tobacco; I may even be able to use the soap. But tell me, what on earth could I do with all this needle and thread?"

The women assured him he would need it, and they continued giving out comfort kits with needle and thread—black, khaki and white thread.

They have sent out 450 comfort kits to chaplain aid, 250 to be distributed at headquarters at Christmas time, 200 to the Knights of Columbus for the chaplains and secretaries, and they're planning to send out still more comfort kits with part of the proceeds of the United War Work Campaign for $170,500,000 of November 11-18. And in each kit there is thread—black, white and khaki thread.

Yesterday a letter came from the Knights of Columbus secretary who took away the "darn good pipe."

"If you're sending over some Christmas kits," he wrote, "would you mind sticking in some needles and thread? My khaki mostly went to darning black socks after the black was all used up, and I've even mended the black dress of a little refugee girl with that white spool. I'm learning to crochet holes in most anything, and I think if I had a little more thread I'd learn to embroider rips. In fact, I've taken to sewing more than smoking, and I find it's great sport."